

Submission  
No 96

**INQUIRY INTO OFF-PROTOCOL PRESCRIBING OF  
CHEMOTHERAPY IN NSW**

**Name:** Ms Barbara Krickl

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Dear Committee Members,

I first met Dr Kiran Phadke in October 1993 when my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. After having received radiotherapy treatment at St. George Hospital Kogarah her cancer recurred and she was referred to Dr Phadke to discuss the possibility of chemotherapy.

We were deeply shocked by the new diagnosis, as we were told that the disease had not only recurred but also spread very quickly. My mother felt devastated by the news but hoped that chemotherapy treatments would be an option to help her. I accompanied her to her appointment with Dr Phadke and from the moment we met him we felt reassured and taken care of. For any patient faced with a life threatening illness it makes a huge difference if a medical professional shows an understanding of the individual's worries and concerns before embarking on medical advice.

This was certainly the case with Dr Phadke. His caring and considerate manner, coupled with his ability to explain treatment options, implications and possible side-effects, helped my mother immensely in dealing with this terrible disease and having to make major decisions about the medical path to take.

Based on Dr Phadke's clear and realistic explanations my mother decided on the chemotherapy option Dr Phadke considered the most appropriate for her type of cancer and her particular case. Judging by the explanations and advice my mother she definitely felt more in control and more positive about being able to make an informed decision. For us, it was such a relief when we first met Kiran Phadke, because he took the time to explain my mother's type of cancer and its sudden unusual symptoms. At every stage of my mother's treatment and consultations with Dr Phadke, we were confident that he always made appropriate decisions tailored to each stage of her illness. During the years my mother received chemotherapy at the Cancer Care Center at St. George Hospital in Kogarah, we always tried to see Dr Phadke personally, which often meant long waiting times as he was very much in demand. Living with cancer is bad enough in itself, but having to face different doctors at the hospital, often having to explain details over and over, is extremely stressful. On some of our appointments at the hospital junior doctors needed to consult with more senior doctors, which could be very difficult at times when my mother was feeling unwell. On some occasions, Dr Phadke had to be consulted by other doctors about her results, which meant several days' delay and caused a lot of stress and anxiety. We, therefore, tried to book in with Dr Phadke personally as often as we could and if necessary, made appointments to see him in his rooms as. My mother continued to consult Dr Phadke until her admission to Calvary hospital in August 1998.

During my mother's struggle with cancer and the rapid progression of the disease during that time, we could not have wished for a better oncologist than Dr Phadke. Every time we saw him he took the time to discuss test results and went to the trouble to explain the implications to us. Over the years we came to trust Dr Phadke implicitly. His medical advice, coupled with his care for my mother as an individual and his concern for her physical and mental wellbeing, had an immensely positive impact on her quality of life and her ability to cope. I feel dismayed and incredulous about the dismissal of Dr Kiran Phadke from St. George Hospital and the way in which he has been portrayed in the media. Considering Dr Phadke's longstanding efforts in providing cancer sufferers with the best possible treatments, as well as his dedication to his patients, the Health Minister's sudden and very public announcement about Dr Phadke's supposed wrong doing seems incongruous. I am especially concerned about Dr Phadke's dismissal from St. George Hospital, without him being given recourse to put his case. Surely his departure could have been dealt with more appropriately. He should

have been given the opportunity to reply and Mrs Skinner's ought to have been asked to show substantive evidence before demanding dismissal. The Health Minister showed no regard for the impact Dr Phadke's hasty dismissal would have on the oncological and haematological departments of St George and Sutherland hospitals and completely ignores how devastating this could be for patients who are facing life-threatening diseases and are reliant on Dr Phadke's expertise and knowledge.

Dr Phadke's dismissal from his all his positions is neither in the interest of the hospitals and teaching institutions nor of his patients. Despite Mrs Skinner's actions as well as the negative publicity Dr Phadke has received, I would not hesitate to consult him in his capacity as an oncologist if I required cancer treatments. I consider his dismissal short-sighted and inappropriate and a great loss to cancer sufferers.

Yours sincerely,  
Barbara Krickl